



Pittsburgh
Center of Excellence
Director: Michael J. Fine, MD, MSc
Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2008

The Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) and Philadelphia VA Medical Center (PVAMC) continued to advance our mission to promote equity and quality in health and health care among veterans in FY 2008. Our research continues to focus on vulnerable veteran populations, including those that face potential discrimination because of race, ethnicity, or social status, and those at risk for disparities in health or health care due to physical and/or mental conditions.

In FY 2008, we refined our strategic plan to link goals related to dissemination and translation of research and defined several new initiatives within each strategic goal. Strategic goals for the current funding period are to: (1) advance the science of health equity and health services research; (2) impact VA health care through effective dissemination and translation of research; (3) support health equity and health services research training and mentoring within VHA; and (4) maintain and enhance an organizational infrastructure and intellectual environment that promotes our mission and goals.

Key new initiatives to help us achieve these strategic goals are: (1) ensuring CHERP representation on regional and national informatics initiatives that set priorities for information integration, infrastructure, governance, and analytical tools to support and enhance research; (2) promoting development of new methodology (e.g., geographic information systems) to facilitate research that examines the impact of urban/rural location on quality and equity of health care; (3) building on existing expertise in qualitative research to improve the quality and equity of VA health care; and (4) expanding existing expertise to broaden our pharmacotherapy (e.g., drug safety, adverse event detection, racial differences) research portfolio.

Highlights of FY 2008 include: (1) a visit by the Honorable James B. Peake, MD, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to CHERP Philadelphia in February 2008; (2) establishment of a new Section of Health Care Disparities and International Health in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh led by Dr. Ibrahim; (3) establishment of a new Center on Health Incentives at the University of Pennsylvania directed by Dr. Volpp; and (4) a Center-wide Investigators Retreat in September 2008 focused on identifying opportunities and challenges at the investigator and center levels and developing a well-informed agenda for the FY 2009 CHERP Steering Committee Meeting.